Espionage in Air Head Quarters

4165. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY :
SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE :

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether a major case of espionage has, recently, been detected in the Air Head Quarters involving a number of seniors' in service and retired officers including a former Air Vice-Marshal;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps proposed to prevent the occurrence of such incidents; and

(d) the steps taken to bring the culprits to book ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE(SHRI KRISHNAMRAJU) : (a) and (b) CBI has recently arrested four retired and one serving Air Force personnel, one official working in the Ministry of Defence and some others.

(c) Departmental Security Instructions on handling protected information have been issued from time to time in order to ensure security of protected documents and information. Periodical and surprise security checks are carried out to ensure strict compliance of the security instructions.

(d) The matter is under investigation.

Allegations on JAG's Impartiality

4166. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a)whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item appearing in the 'Asian Age' dated the 14th June, 2001, captioned "Allegations cloud JAG's (Judge Advocate General) impartiality, credibility";

(b) if so, the fact thereof; and

(c) the action proposed for a systemic review of the military judicial system to plug loopholes and introduce accountability ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAMRAJU) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A statement is attached.

Statement

Allegations on JAG's Impartiality

The issues raised in the news item referred to have been duly examined by the concerned agencies of Army Headquarters and action has been taken thereon in accordance with the rules.

The allegation levelled by the news paper that the 'internal investigations have proved beyond reasonable doubt that the legal advice rendered by JAG officers has often been highly questionable and even driven by monetary and other extraneous considerations' has largely been found to be untrue. JAG's office did not recommend any leniency to be shown to any of the departmental officers if found blameworthy.

Military judicial system, like any other judicial system, is under constant review. Amendments thereto are effected from time to time as required. The system has inherent and inbuilt accountability of all concerned.

Acquisition of military equipment from Russia at friendship price

4167. PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that for acquisition of military equipment the friendship price from Russia is now not available;

(b) Whether for acquisition of the equipment, Global tenders would be floated and no advance payment would be made for future acquisitions; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAMRAJU): (a) to (c) India enjoys a special relationship with Russia and there is substantial import of military equipment from that country Progressively, the prices being offered by Russian vendors are increasing but they are still competitive with prices of similar equipments from other countries. Requests for proposals are issued to all possible manufacturers who can meet the requirement of the Armed Forces. Payment of advance is a factor of ultimate price and is one of the points of negotiations with the vendors. Advance is agreed to in the Price Negotiation Committee if the vendor offers commensurate reduction in prices.